

IN THE CLAIMS

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-12 were pending. Please cancel claim 12, add claim 13, and amend claims 1, 4-11. Claims 1-11 and 13 remain pending.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of pre-processing of a machine-readable form image with non-fixed fields layout, ~~comprising the method comprising:~~

[[-]] ~~acquiring a bit-mapped image of [[the]] the machine-readable form filled in form,~~
~~with print in one or more non-fixed data input fields;~~

[[-]] ~~identifying at least one form model of a form, the at least one form model containing~~
~~spatial and parametric properties of objects thereof~~[[,]] ;

[[-]] ~~preliminarily assigning at least one object of the form as a reference point for spatial~~
~~binding of at least one non-fixed data input field thereof; [[, -]] performing at least the~~
~~following steps:~~

[[•]] ~~a step of eliminating any skew, distortion and noise of the in the bit-mapped image~~[[,]];

[[•]] ~~a step of parsing the bit-mapped image into regions~~[[,]] ; and

[[•]] ~~a step of defining a spatial location of at least one non-fixed data input field relative~~[[ly]]
~~to at least one reference point, said step further comprising: wherein said defining the location of~~
~~the at least one non-fixed data input field comprises:~~

[[■]] ~~selecting a non-fixed data input field to search in the said the at least one~~
~~form model description; ;~~

[[■]] ~~accepting from the at least one form model description at least one~~
~~reference point properties property for [[the]] a spatial relative reference of the said data~~
~~input field~~[[,]] ;

[[■]] ~~searching and locating said at least one reference point on the form bit-~~
~~mapped image~~[[,]] ;

[[■]] ~~searching and locating the said data input field on the form bit-mapped~~
~~image relative~~[[ly]] to at least one reference point taking into account all spatial and
parametrical properties[[,]] described in the form model[[,]] ; and

[[■]] ~~profound identification of the said identifying each data input field~~
~~position in the case of multiple search result data input fields.~~

2. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the said reference point is represented by a text region.
3. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the said text region is additionally subjected to a text recognition.
4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein in the case of multiple ~~search result~~ data input fields the said identification of each data input field is performed via setting up and accepting of hypotheses and compliance estimation ~~with~~ of the form model description.
5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein an additional information about ~~[[the]]~~ each of said non-fixed data input field is used.
6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a non-fixed data input field may be used as a reference point.
7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~the said step of identifying each data input field identification~~ in ~~[[a]]~~ the case of multiple data input fields ~~identification result~~ is performed at least partly manually.
8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial location of a reference point ~~spatial location~~ is not fixed from a first scan of the machine-readable form to a second scan of the machine-readable form.
9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein one reference point is used for spatial binding of more ~~[[then]]~~ than one data input field.
10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial binding of one data input field is performed relative to more ~~[[then]]~~ than one reference point.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein a reference point comprises more ~~[[then]]~~ than one form object.

12. (CANCELED)

13. (NEW) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the identifying each data input field position in the case of multiple data input fields is a profound identification.